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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 005239

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TAGS: PREL PHUM PINR CD SU FR

SUBJECT: FRANCE: ENDING CHAD'S SUPPORT TO DARFUR MILITIAS

REF: A. STATE 124400

¶B. N'DJAMENA 1006

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reason 1.5 (b/d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In response to ref A demarche, MFA DAS-equivalent Foucher said on August 2 that France shared the USG's concerns about Chadian support for militias in Darfur but believed that President Deby was not responsible for this support, which was being provided by other Chadians over whom Deby had only limited control. The GOF would not oppose sanctions against Daoussa Deby and others. The GOF was concerned about signs of a buildup among Chadian rebel forces in Sudan that perhaps signaled an offensive against N'Djamena after the end of the rainy season in mid-September and before a new UN mission could be deployed. French FM Douste-Blazy is planning to attend Deby's inauguration ceremony August 8 in N'Djamena. JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim on August 1 reiterated to the French his opposition to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). END SUMMARY.

CHAD SUPPORT FOR MILITIAS

¶2. (C) After receiving ref A points on July 31, MFA DAS-equivalent for West Africa Bruno Foucher responded on August 2, during a meeting that included MFA Sudan deskoff Jeremie Robert. Foucher said the GOF shared USG concerns about Chad's and Sudan's support for militias operating across their respective borders. He indicated that the GOF had conveyed its concerns to both sides, emphasizing the need to shut down the militias as a step toward regional peace. Concerning Chad, and echoing Ref B, Foucher said the GOF did not believe President Deby was personally involved in any support Darfur militias might receive from Chad. Foucher said that other senior Chadians (including Daoussa Deby), who were not completely under Deby's control, were providing this assistance. Foucher suggested that Deby was powerless to stop them, despite wanting to promote peace and successful implementation of the DPA. Foucher said the GOF would have "no problems at all" supporting targeted sanctions against Daoussa Deby and others involved in assisting Darfur militia forces. He repeated, however, the GOF belief that President Deby was not involved in this assistance, that his intentions were good, and that he was powerless to stop Daoussa Deby and others who might be involved (the "loose electrons," as Foucher put it). He said that President Deby's powerlessness illustrated the weakness of the Chadian state.

NEW OFFENSIVE TAKING SHAPE IN SUDAN?

¶3. (C) Foucher and Robert said the GOF was becoming more and more worried about a new offensive against N'Djamena that was taking shape on the Sudanese side of the border. "This is not based on rumors," Foucher said, but rather on the reports of MFA officials who had recently toured the border areas. The signs of a buildup were obvious, Foucher and Robert said, and were not being concealed. Such an offensive could be timed to take place at the end of the rainy season (which typically ends in mid-September) and before the deployment of a new UN mission for the Darfur region. Foucher worried that this new offensive might be more effective than the one in April, which suffered from uncoordinated leadership. He said that the one now taking shape appeared to be better organized.

DEBY'S INAUGURATION

¶4. (C) FM Douste-Blazy was planning to attend President Deby's inauguration in N'Djamena on August 8, Foucher reported. Douste-Blazy would only be in Chad for a few hours and his participation would be largely ceremonial, but Foucher said that Douste-Blazy would meet privately with President Deby for a short time. Foucher said that Douste-Blazy would make two points: the need for Deby to continue to press for political dialogue with the opposition, even if the opposition displayed little interest in such a dialogue; and the need to continue seeking rapprochement with Sudan President Bashir. We suggested that this might be a good occasion for Douste-Blazy to ask that Chad cease supporting Darfur militia groups; Foucher indicated that the MFA would consider this point.

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¶5. (C) Sudan deskoff Robert said that he met with JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim on August 1, noting that Ibrahim's meeting with "only" a deskoff was indicative of the status the MFA wanted to accord him. At the meeting, Khalil Ibrahim continued to resist signing the DPA, citing, in his view, its many shortcomings and his desire to renegotiate its provisions. Robert said that he reiterated to Khalil Ibrahim the need to support the DPA and to end his stance as an outside spoiler. Robert said that Khalil Ibrahim seemed unmoved by his arguments, and he lamented that Khalil Ibrahim might remain intransigent, having found for himself a more meaningful role as an outsider rather than as a DPA adherent.

FOUCHER'S FUTURE

¶6. (C) Foucher said that his nomination as France's next ambassador to Chad was in the vetting process, stressing that "nothing is final until it's printed in the Journal Officiel." With his recent promotion, he was now at-grade to be an ambassador in France's system, thus overcoming an earlier hurdle. He would still have to be approved by the Council of Ministers (usually a formality, "although anything can happen," he commented). If everything went smoothly, he could go to N'Djamena in September, he said, but repeated that "it's not official yet, so please don't view it as a done deal."

¶7. (C) Septel reports Foucher's comments on Cote d'Ivoire and Togo.

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